TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch / Opening Prayer by: Bobby Rader
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#144 O, Worship the King
#214 Have You Seen Jesus My Lord?

Scripture Reading by: Pierce Balch
#315 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Communion Devotional by: Jerry Mallernee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
Sermon: "The Chosen: Philip"
John 1:43-46

#907 Hark the Gentle voice
#704 Bind Us Together
Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Bobby Rader's small group meets today
at 5:00 pm at the building

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Apr. 13, 2025

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Forgiveness of Sins

In our last article, we discussed how, above anything else, baptism is associated with the name of Jesus: we commit ourselves to become his followers, we unite ourselves with His teachings, and we receive His blessings. What are those blessings? First and foremost is the forgiveness of sins.

The Day of Pentecost
Imagine the scene that Luke records in **Acts 2.** Jerusalem was bursting at the seams with pilgrims who had come for Pentecost. Suddenly, a sound like a violent wind howled into the city, strangely focusing its force on one particular house. A dozen men soon emerged, all speaking in different languages.

People from all over the Roman world heard their own dialects as these men spoke. The result was amazement and confusion: how could this be happening? These men were unmistakably from Galilee. Galilee was the Appalachia of Palestine; these backward, uneducated, rubes couldn't possibly have studied so many languages. Some even began making light of the bizarre situation, suggesting the men were simply drunk. The one thing that was clear was that something unusual—unique—was happening.

Then one of the 12 stepped forward and quieted the crowd. It was Peter, one of those who had followed Jesus of Nazareth. Everyone in Jerusalem knew about Jesus: he claimed to be the Messiah, gathering a number of followers around him, and for that he was crucified at Passover. That was not quite 2 months before. The story of His death—and then of his missing body—had been the main topics of conversation among the departing Passover crowds. And that story was fresh on everyone's mind at Pentecost.

Now, at the center of this bizarre event, one of Jesus' followers, spoke up to explain what was happening. Peter gave a sermon the crowd would never forget; he combined the words of the OT prophets with what their own eyes had seen. He began with the prophet Joel, who predicted the Spirit of God would be poured out on humanity; he claimed the crowd was witnessing the fulfillment of that prophecy. Then Peter started talking about Jesus. He reminded them of all the miracles Jesus had done—which no one could deny, many in the audience had actually seen him make the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, perhaps even been in one of those crowds he fed. Then he reminded them that they had watched as he was condemned to death. Some had even been in the mob, shouting to "Crucify him!" Then he claimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead, in fulfilment of a prophecy of David. Now, Jesus had ascended to the right hand of God, fulfilling another prophecy; he had poured out the Holy Spirit that they all were witnessing. Then Peter reached the climax of his sermon: *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.* **(Acts 2:36)**

His audience realized he was right. Luke says they were cut to the heart. They pleaded: what should we do? How can we make this right? Peter answered, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* **(Acts 2:38)**

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Steve Lunceford has cancer.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Steve Ward, Geri Cryer, Gloria McKelroy, Scott Overton, Rickey Lucas, Debbie Lynn, Kim Berka

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific, Mani Pagidopali in India

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, Deacons meeting Monday, Apr. 14th at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, April 17th at 8:00 a.m.

Barrett Station Church of Christ will be having an area wide tent revival in April. We want to show our support for them. Bryant Perkins will be speaking on Tuesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. A flyer is on the bulletin board.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Kathy Young on the passing of her mother, Audrey Duhon. She passed away Thursday morning. Also, Kathy's brother fell at home and passed away Thursday morning also.

Senior Sunday

Sunday, May 4th will be Senior Sunday. We will have a potluck dinner after morning service. Our 2 graduating seniors are Parker Balch and Rock Cary.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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The Forgiveness of Sins

Peter told them to do two things: 1) repent and 2) for each of them to be baptized in Jesus name. Then they would receive two things: 1) the forgiveness of sins and 2) the gift of the HS. We will look at the gift of the Holy Spirit next week. What about the forgiveness of sins?

To answer this, we need to go back again to Jesus himself. Jesus came to earth for several important reasons: to bring the message of God's rule, his kingdom, breaking in; to show how God intended humanity to live; to reveal most fully what God was really like. But he also came to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. Humanity was lost in sin, incapable of saving ourselves; everyone needed Jesus.

At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted what Paul later calls the Lord's Supper. He asked the apostles to partake of unleavened bread, telling them it represented his body. Then he took the cup, full of the fruit of the vine, and said, *Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins* **(Mt 26:27b-28).** Notice, the language here: his blood was *poured out for the forgiveness of sins.* That is precisely the same language and grammar as used in **Acts 2:38.** What did he mean? Jesus was pouring out his blood in order that humanity could be forgiven. His blood obtained forgiveness: no blood, no forgiveness.

Thus, when Peter used this same phrase, it was clear what he meant: they needed to be baptized in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins. If they were willing to turn to God in repentance (which is worth an article in itself—we only have so much space!) and be immersed, then they would be forgiven.

Significance of Baptism

That leads to another question: why did Peter connect baptism so closely to forgiveness? Once again, we find the answer with Jesus, specifically at the cross. In his death, the price for the sins of the world has been paid. Yet Scripture teaches that many people will not be saved. Why?

Clearly, not everyone receives the blessings given in the death of Christ. Jesus will not force himself on anyone; we are free to accept or reject him. God has paid the penalty and offered us the way to unite ourselves to him. So how do we accept his offer and allow our sins to be covered with the blood of Christ? *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* **(Rom 6:3)**

We noted last week that baptism unites us with Christ. Paul takes that deeper: it unites us with his death. In the waters of baptism, our souls are covered with blood of Jesus shed on cross. That takes us again to the final Passover meal. Why did Jesus say his blood was to be shed? *For the forgiveness of sins.* Baptism is the place where we receive the forgiveness of Christ's death.

When we understand this connection, other passages of Scripture make more sense. For example, when Saul is instructed by Ananias to *Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.* **(Acts 22:16).** What was Ananias saying? Being immersed might wash dirt away, but sins? Ananias was referring to the spiritual washing God gives in baptism; it's another way to say God forgives us through Christ's death at baptism. The whole idea of washing sins away may be another reason God chose baptism. We understand that water washes; when our hands get dirty, we wash them in the sink. Baptism, then, symbolizes what he does to our souls through Christ: it pictures washing away sin from us.

Jesus died to offer forgiveness to the world. We are baptized to unite our lives with Jesus; it only makes sense that when we are united with him, we are united with the blessings of his death. And of all blessing of Christ's death, forgiveness of sins is emphasized more than any other. Next week, we will examine some of the others.

Bryant Perkins